

ADVENTURE PROBE

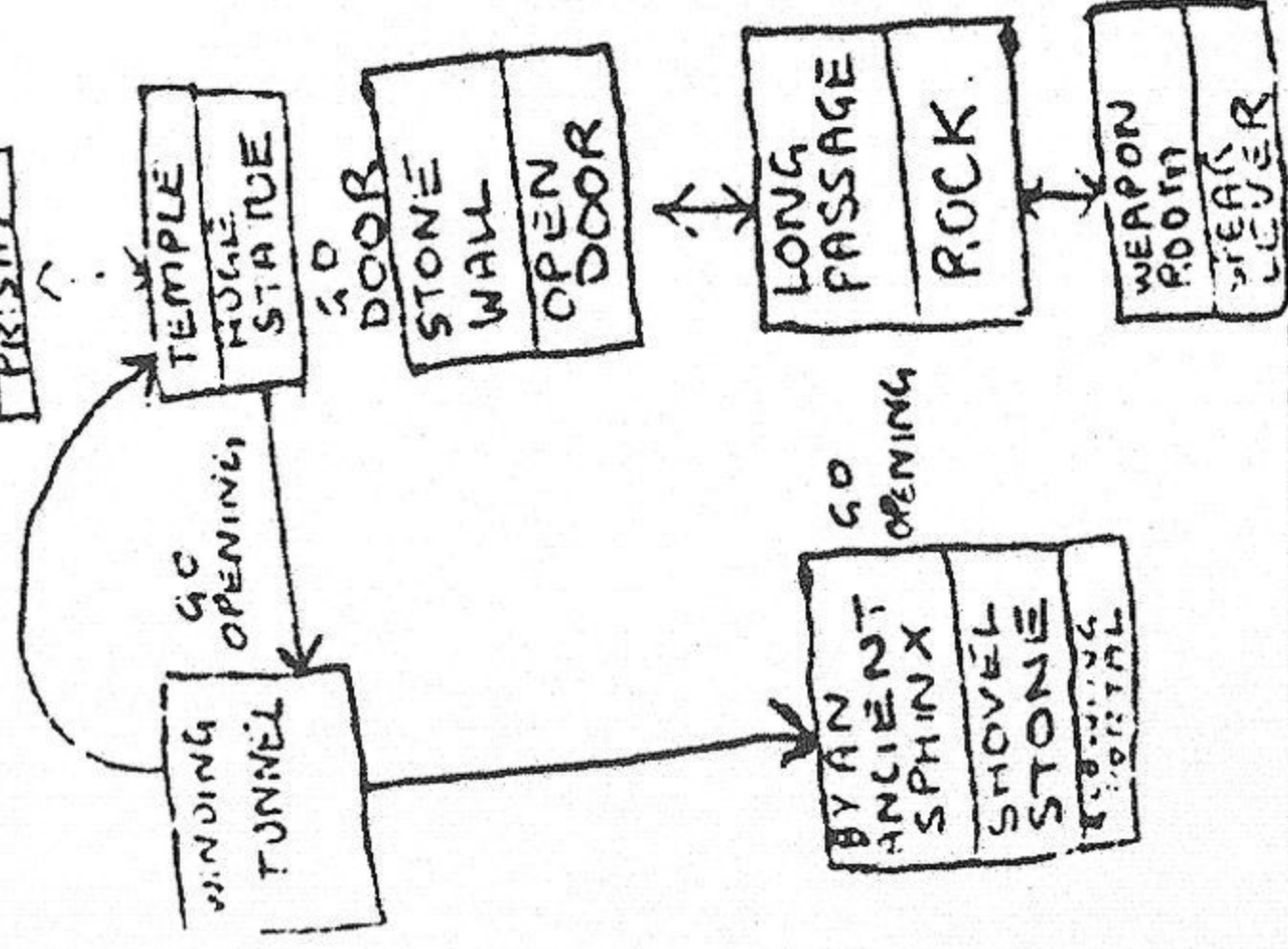
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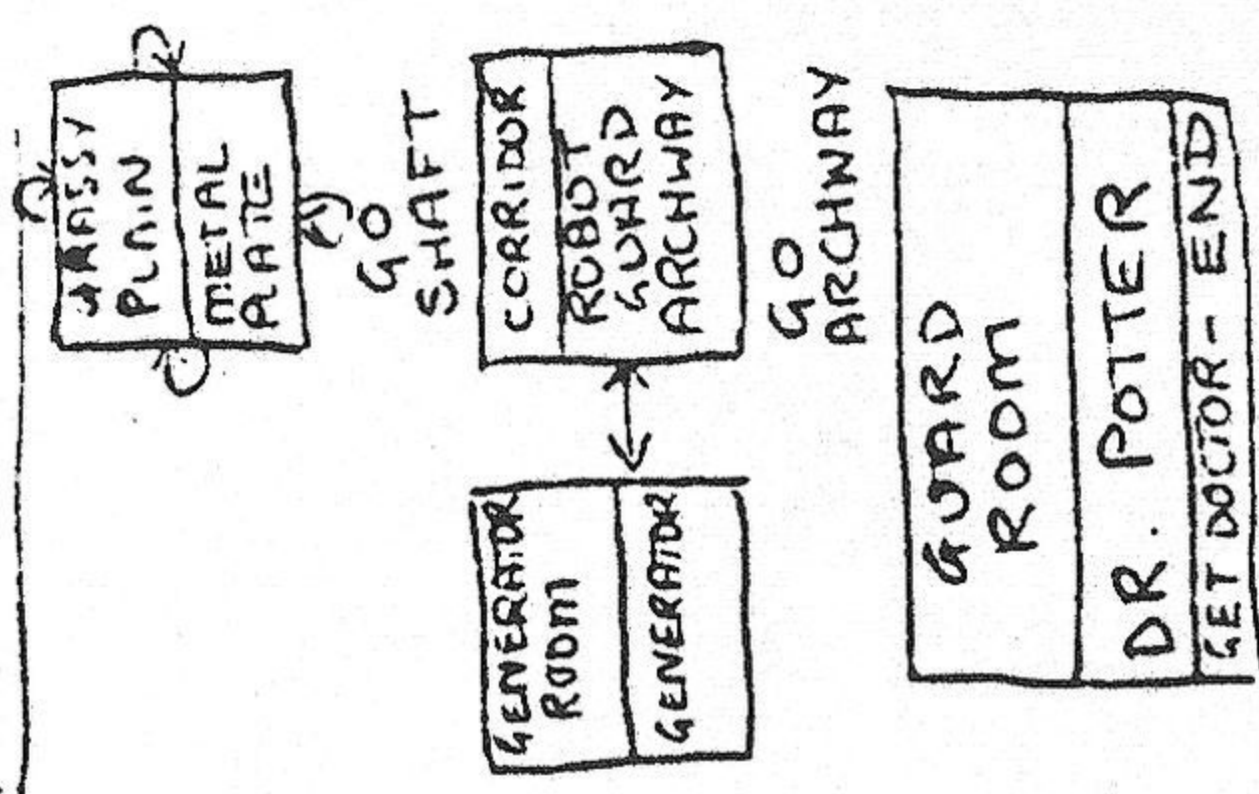
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MAP ANCIENT SPINX

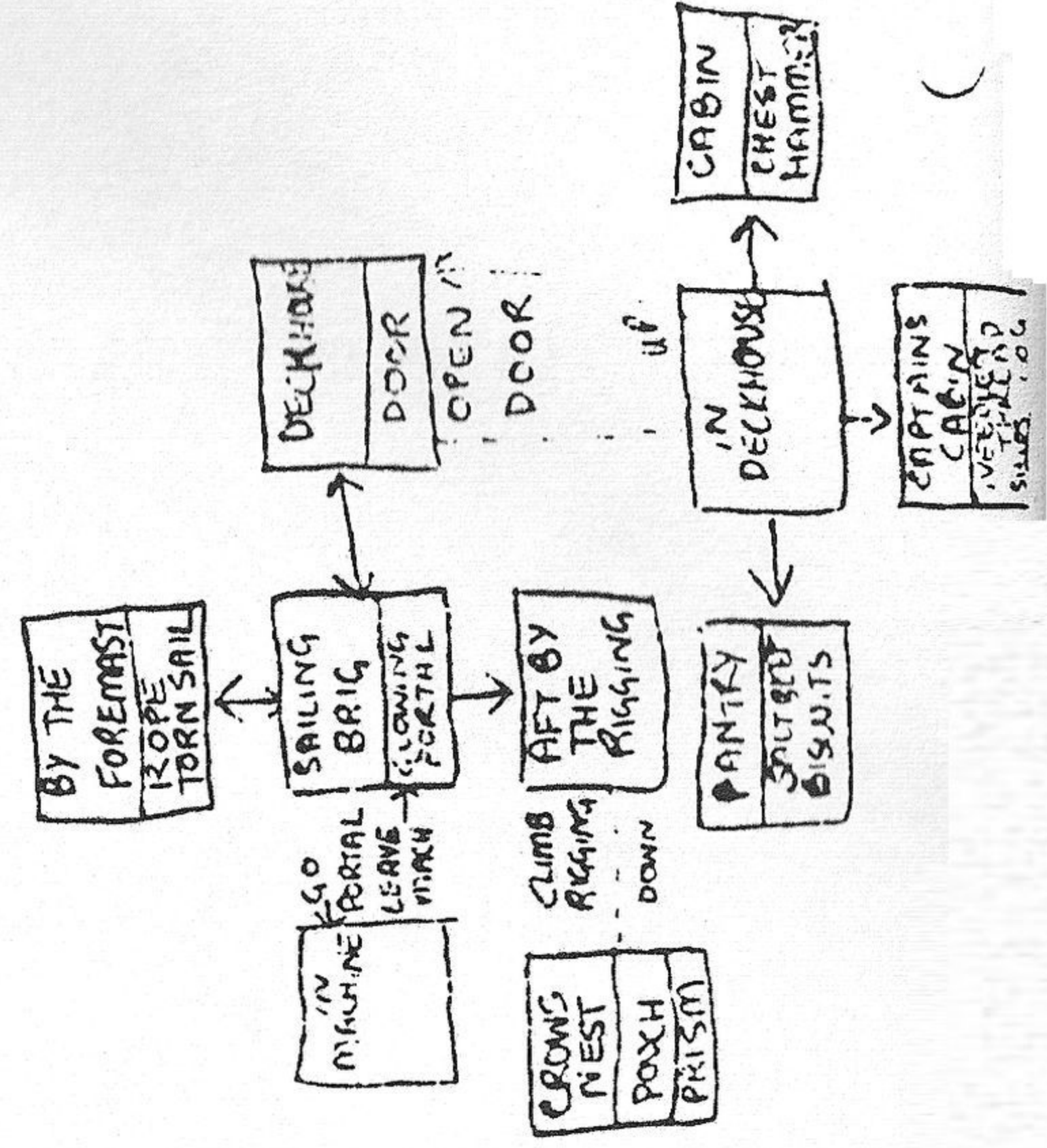


TIME MACHINE

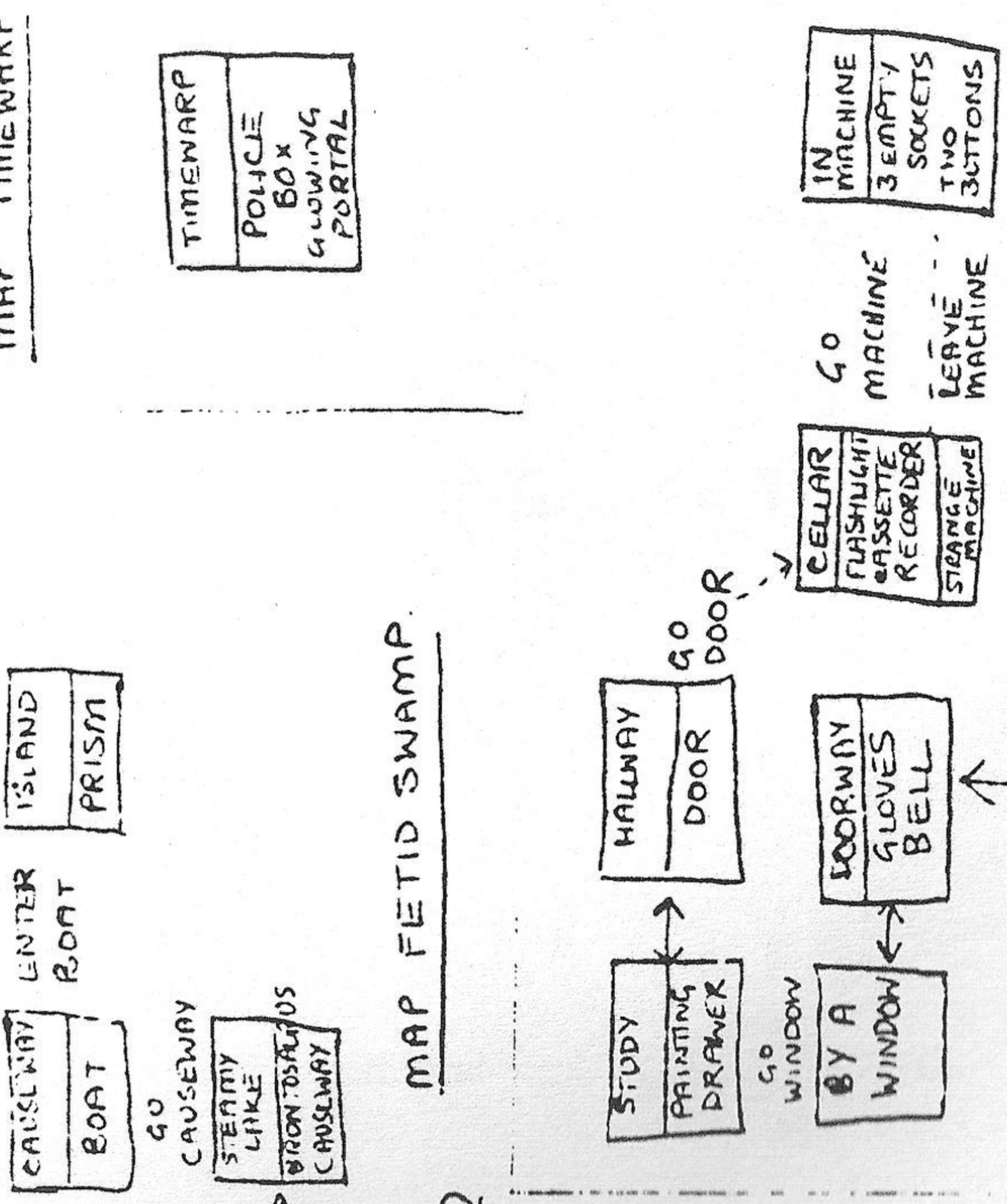
MAP GRASSY PLAIN



MAP OF SAILING BRIG



MAP TIMEWARP



MAP FETID SWAMP

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the new look Probe! And the format isn't the only thing that has changed.....a glance at the front cover will show that the address for correspondence has altered. Instead of Pat's postman (Postman Pat?) being weighed down, it's now the turn of Sandra's postman to raise disbelieving eyebrows at the quantity of mail he has to shove through the letter box every day..... if he can find it that is, she's hidden it around the corner!

This change means that Sandra will be dealing with the sorting of Probe mail, while Pat will be sorting the mail for Contact. However, letters relating to either mag may be sent to either address, the relevant parts will be passed across the same day. (It would help if different types of correspondence could be on separate sheets, but enclosed in the same envelope to save you postage!)

It seems from the many letters we receive that the majority of male adventurers have complete access to their computers, while the female of the species have to share theirs with their children. However, they must find the time to play on the machines because we now have some Queens of the Castle at last!

This month we've been able to include maps in the magazine as we are now having all copies photocopied to give Pat's poor printer a rest. If there is any particular map you would like to see included in the magazine, drop us a line and we'll do our best to oblige. We can also supply maps for many adventures, just send two 17p stamps with your request and we'll pop them in the post if we have a copy.

Graham Robson receives one month's free subscription for all the hints and tips he sent in, some of which are printed in this issue. Whose turn will it be next month? Thanks to everyone who sent contributions, keep them coming!

That's it for now, hope you enjoy reading Probe. See you next month.

Sandra + Pat

PBM and Friends

Hello again, welcome to the second PBM and Friends. I hope my introduction in last months Probe interested you enough to think about joining a PBM game, it is a wonderful hobby. This month I will take a closer look at the pros and cons of PBM games and also review Saturnalia from Sloth Enterprises. As I said last month, when you join a PBM game you get a Rule Book, a CSF and a couple of free turns. However, some games offer you slightly more than this, usually in the form of maps or computer printouts. What you actually receive depends on the type of game you play. There are several different types of games, but these can be sorted into four groups. They are Fantasy World adventures, Wargaming between Planets/Tribes/Civilisations, Space Combat games and Space Exploration games.

However, just lately there has been a tendency for companies to start with a slightly different type of game. A prime example of this is a game called It's A Crime from KJC Games. It is set in the near future and involves you trying to become a gangland boss, the ultimate aim is to become Godfather and head of all the other bosses. It's A Crime is currently the top PBM game in the country. This is mainly due to it being specially designed for people new to PBM and is ideal for a novice player. Also it is one of the cheapest games to play. It costs £5.00 for the starter pack but this includes the first eight turns. Future turns cost £5.00 for eight turns. This is excellent value at about 64p a turn and it is run by the largest PBM company in Britian, which can't be bad. I have just joined this game, so I will be reviewing it in a few months.

So what do you do? Well you must first fill in your CSF and return it to your GM. You will shortly receive your first turn sheet and depending on the game maybe some maps or printouts. This is where the fun of PBM comes to light. Using the information given to you, you must then decide what course of action you will take. For example should you ask around for information about the Magical Guardian guarding the mountain pass, or does your adversary really want a cease fire or is he conning you into a feeling of false security. Everything must be considered before writing down your 'orders' and returning your turn sheet. The more you put into the turn sheet the more you will get back. A wealth of information can be gained simply by asking

for it. The GM will usually consider your actions and, of course other players actions, on their merit. It would be ill advised to go into battle without being correctly prepared, and as the GM would not get you killed unnecessarily, he may end your turn prematurely and advise you on what to do.

Now to our review of Saturnalia. Saturnalia has been played for a few years now and was recently voted best Fantasy PBM game in the first ever British PBM awards. It is an excellent example of a role playing fantasy game. You play the part of a lone adventurer wandering around a huge land (based on 1000x1000 map) in search of fame and fortune. Spread around the several different islands of Saturnalia are a host of cities, towns, villages, mountain ranges, forests, and many more features. It has a free format, meaning you can do almost anything that you wish.

However, the main way of achieving fame is through the many rumours found when visiting a new city or area. These ' rumours ' are like the quests found in computer adventures. You must investigate them, asking around the city, or by visiting the temple of your chosen religion and asking the priest/priestess for help. I personally am investigating several rumours at the moment including the Evil Barrowswood, said to be heaving with Goblins (there is currently a bounty for their heads), and a giant humanoid and his mate at a nearby peninsula.

Saturnalia is extremely atmospheric and brilliantly organised by its two very talented GMs. I would thoroughly recomend this game to anyone who enjoys a Tolkien style adventure. It is large to say the least, and to actually visit every location in the game would take many years of devoted playing. It is in the medium price range, costing £1.50 a turn, each turn being every two weeks.

For further details about Saturnalia and Its A Crime write to the following addresses. For Saturnalia write to Sloth Enterprises, P.O. Box 82, Southampton, SO9 7FG. And for Its A Crime write to KJC Games, P.O. Box 11, Cleveleys, Lancs, FY5 2UL.

Thats all for this month. Next month we will look at the many alliances and organisations between PBM players, discuss Newsletters and maybe review a game or two.... Anthony Mudrik Collins

DO'S AND DON'TS
Malcolm Serbert

As an adventure game author I have made a list of many of the things which I dislike to find when I am playing other games. My approach being that if I avoid putting these things into my game, then I should be left with something that comes closer to a quality adventure. According to my dictionary, adventure means 'to incur risk or to hazard oneself or to dare enter an undertaking'. Many of the games which I have played bear no resemblance to any of these definitions. Instead I spend my time wandering from one badly described location to another, picking up objects, as if I were on a shopping expedition. The quality that is lacking is the spirit of adventure: there is no real risk or daring, and the games are just an exercise in puzzle solving, and sometimes lateral thinking. Games with graphics are usually the worst offenders, but in all cases it is the lack of imagination which causes a game to become an 'Unadventure' rather than a true Adventure. I have compiled my own list of dislikes, and it would be interesting to see the views of other players and where they differ from my opinion.

- 1) Avoid boredom, keep the player on edge whenever possible.
- 2) Avoid lack of logic.
- 3) Avoid shoddy descriptions. Try to create an atmosphere.
- 4) Avoid mazes. Who needs them?
- 5) Avoid obvious errors. Playtest your game to destruction.
- 6) Always include an examine object routine, include everything.
- 7) Avoid slow graphics, they are boring if you can't turn them off.
- 8) Avoid instant death without warning, it is unfair.
- 9) Do not use an illogical carry routine, i.e. You have a piano.
- 10) Always include a save game routine.
- 11) Avoid silly plots, I once had to kill and cut a rat for a key.
- 12) Always include a facility to change screen colours.
- 13) Avoid lack of sound, if the computer has it, then use it.
- 14) Avoid random events, they annoy players after a while.
- 15) Avoid pedantic input, i.e. exterminate when kill could be used.
- 16) Avoid too hard a start, allow the player time and movement.
- 17) Avoid sarcasm, it is not a substitute for humour.
- 18) Avoid sex discrimination, in Hampstead females need wives.
- 19) Avoid too small a scenario, 100 locations is minimum.
- 20) Avoid obscure verbs, and give the player a list of verbs used.

SOFTWARE REVIEWS

THE ZACARON MYSTERY - Players - £1.99

The year is 3065 and Earth's fuel reserves will only last a few more months. You are a skilled interstellar pilot whose mission is to search for two Zacaron crystals. These crystals possess enough energy potential to heat Earth for thousands of years. The adventure is split into two parts, each set on a different planet. First you visit Prutor, a backward world, where you will find the first crystal and learn a vital password which will enable you to gain access to Myra. On Myra you will find the second crystal and then you can return home for a heroes welcome.

This is a verb/noun text only adventure, which is a pretty unusual find from one of the bigger software houses. The game boasts various special commands such as a STORE and RECALL Ram save facility, which I found very useful as the normal save to tape didn't work on my copy. I found quite a few bugs in this adventure which really disappointed me as I think any game that is backed by a software company (even a budget game) should be thoroughly de-bugged. The descriptions were quite good, some of the logic totally illogical, the vocabulary very precise, e.g. you have to 'search' locations to find objects. I got killed a few times without warning, which I find particularly annoying, e.g. I was standing by a farm gate which was locked, so I climbed it. Okay, I admit I was trespassing but that doesn't mean I have to be torn to pieces by the farmer's dogs.

On the whole I can't say I was impressed with this one, in fact the only good thing about it is the price.

Sandra - Spectrum

HOBBIT NEWS

Re-released at a reduced price (without the book) this adventure is a must for anyone who doesn't already possess a copy. While rather dated now in terms of 'state-of-the-art' programming, nothing of the atmosphere and challenge has been lost down the years, and it beats many modern offerings hands down (far better than Lord Of The Rings) It's fantastic.....buy it!!!

Q.O.R - MALDALE - £4.95

QOR is a planet colonised by space pirates, who are accumulating military software for a large computer complex. SUC (Supreme Universes Command) aims to stop the pirates by blowing up the complex, and to this end you, Jo, are put aboard the ship of one Zaucu, an exiled noble from QOR who is returning home.

An eerie tune (very enjoyable) accompanies an eerie loading screen. Although this is the only sound used it is very effective in setting the atmosphere.

You begin in your cabin on the ship and spend the first few moves wandering around, getting the feel of the setting, until the ship lands and you join Zaucu at the airlock. Once on the planet, the aim is to collect treasure (I couldn't find it all and some that I could find I couldn't collect).

A short while later you are taken back to the ship where you must locate the air-raft, together with the means to steal it and escape from the ship, down to the planet.....that's the first part.

The second part has you wandering around the Capital, trying to reach Gorone's palace, and ultimately the bedroom. This is as far as I have reached, though I suspect I'm near the end of the game.

So what is the game like to play? For a start it is written with BASIC, but unfortunately many of the features of the utility have not been fully implemented. Vocabulary is limited, and there is no way of turning off the graphics (much to my disgust as their complexity means they take ages to draw!). There are also several instances of careless use of markers making certain actions repeatable when it ought not to be possible. I can't comment on the spelling as the author seems to use a dialect all of his own. Sometimes this makes things a little difficult, as location descriptions tend to be rather sparse in the first place. Another spot that grated on me was the response when trying to go in the wrong direction at the start of part two. The untidiness of this is inexcusable in any game, never mind one selling around the £5 mark.

That said, I thoroughly enjoyed this game and found it very

atmospheric. What with being shot for collecting objects at the wrong time, or meeting girls who don't wait to ask questions, exploring anywhere demands frequent saves which can be to either disc or cassette, regardless of the format in which you buy the game. The gameplay was a nice change from those efforts where you can apparently walk into shops and homes looting indiscriminately, with no-one even objecting. Certainly it felt risky to make ANY move for the first time.

Should you buy it? Personally I felt it to be a little overpriced (particularly considering the number of minor, but nevertheless irritating bugs). But QOR is certainly an enjoyable wander. If you can spare the asking price of a fiver...try it!

(Pat - Amstrad)

HUNCHBACK - Ocean - £8.95

I don't have much to say about this one because there is so little in it!

The plot is the old hunchback story..... avoid the guards and rescue Esmerelda, but there all similarity ceases with the arcade game. The adventure is simply a matter of wandering around Notre Dame, collecting useless objects and trying not to yawn too much. Guards can be passed with perseverance.... no need for fighting, and even if you are wounded it seems to make no difference to your fighting abilities.

Part two contains a quite decent maze, but that's about all, while part three (which I haven't quite finished) is similar to part one.

Atmosphere - nil, interaction - nil, graphics - pretty (but pretty useless)! Overall - don't bother.....it's a hype!!

(Pat - Amstrad)

Dragon of Notacare - David Edgar - £2.50

This is a text only adventure with about forty locations. The plot is very simple, which is sometimes a good thing. You have to find and kill the dragon which has been terrifying the village of Notacare. You also have to bring back proof that the dragon is dead.

I have mixed feelings about 'Dragon of Notacare'. The text descriptions are good and apart from one or two difficulties with vocabulary it is an enjoyable game. I particularly enjoyed the response to "Examine map". A drawn map appears on screen and proves to be a very useful guide to the size of the game.

Read carefully there are plenty of clues cleverly hidden in the text. On completing the adventure I was given a score of 85%, I don't know what I failed to do. I feel it would be an excellent choice for a beginner to play as the problems are not too difficult. I was a bit disappointed with the size of the game as I'd finished just as I was getting into the part, but I did enjoy playing it.

Sandra - Spectrum

READERS REVIEWS

Some time ago we asked readers to send in their own views on any games they had played. Some of you have done so, and we will be printing these over the coming months, but a few of you said you didn't feel qualified to write a review as you were new to adventuring.

Please don't let inexperience put you off. Regardless of how many games you have played, you must have an opinion on the merits, playability, atmosphere, value for money etc of the games you have tackled.

So write in to us and tell us YOUR views..... we want to know!!

GETTING YOU STARTED

EMERALD ISLE You begin the adventure stuck up a mangrove tree wearing a parachute. The first thing to do is "Release parachute", retrieve the parachute for use later. When you have climbed down the tree you find yourself in a maze, keep going south until you find a silver coin. "Get coin" and go east to the Main Square, if you end up back in the maze go S, S, E, E, to get back to the Main Square again. Explore the area picking up everything you can find. Wear the ermine robe to get into the palace. Each time you enter a location showing a letter of the alphabet, make a note of the letters as they form a password for use later in the game. Give the parachute to the seamstress who will give you a bronze coin (use the coin to buy carbide granules). The King gives you a gold coin, spend it on your health later in the game. The silver coin will buy a season ticket to enable you to travel on the trains. If you go down twice in the dark from the palace yard you will be on the station platform where you can catch a train to the seaside. At the end of your journey go North from the Station to a Sandy Beach. Dig here and you'll find a pair of spikes (useful for climbing smooth areas). When you come across the spider "Throw the glue west". SAVE GAME HERE. Don't be frightened to explore in the dark as it is essential to explore the foothills to find the axe. The first thing to do is to make a canoe, for this you need the axe, d.i.y. manual and the log. Once you've got your canoe you can explore the waters around the island. To light the lamp, fill it with water and insert the carbide granules. To use it underwater you need a wooden bowl, which, when inverted, protects the lamp. All the treasures you find must be taken to the treasure chamber. Once all the treasures have been stored you can enter the beautiful room and finish the game.

THE ZACARON MYSTERY

Examine window, W, Search, Get talisman, Exam handle, (Wait until you hear a beeping sound), Pull handle, E, Examine window, S, Examine airlock, (Once the ship has landed), Turn wheel..... N, N, Get ring, S, S, E, E, Search, Get silver, in..... W, W, N, E, In, S, Give silver, N, Search, Get penknife, S, Give talisman, N, N, W, N, Fill bucket, S, S, E, E, Extinguish fire.....

GETTING YOU STARTED (CONTINUED)

1942 MISSION - extract from a solution by Tom Frost

Get boots, Wear boots, N, Get knife, Get polish, Get trowel, E, Get photo, S, E, S, S, Remove boots, Drop boots, Get shoes, Wear shoes, N, W, Get parachute, Wear parachute, Blacken face, W, S, Get torch, D, Dig hole, Drop trowel, Remove parachute, Bury parachute, S, E, E, S, S, Say Scotch.....

ENCHANTER - extract from a solution by R. H. Rainbird

Start at junction. NE, In shack, Open oven, Get bread, jug and lantern, Go out, NE, SE, NE, Drink water, Fill jug with water, SW, SE, SW, SW, S, GNUSTO REZROV (Spell given to you by crone), NE, NE, E, E, REZROV gate (after memorising Rezrov spell), In, Memorise FROTZ then FROTZ lantern, N, N, E, E, E, E, E, Memorise REZROV then REZROV North Gate, N, Get KREBF Scroll, E, memorise NITFOL then NITFOL frogs, look under Lily pad and get damp (CLEESH) scroll, GNUSTO KREBF spell, GNUSTO CLEESH spell, W, S, W, W, W, W, W, S, S, S, S, E, Down, N, Open door, N, Move block, E, Get stained scroll (EXEX), GNUSTO EXEX, W, S, U, W, U, Go to bed and sleep, Get up, Examine bedpost.....

WHAT DO YOU THINK

Strange how software houses think they know what the adventurer wants, but what the adventurer actually wants (and can't get because software houses think it won't sell) is often an entirely different view?

Write in and tell us your views on the following questions:

- 1) What do you think of Lenslock?
- 2) What is your favourite adventure and why?
- 3) What is your least favourite adventure and why?
- 4) What is the best value for money adventure?
- 5) What is the worst value for money adventure?

GRAPHICS

As most software houses will not even look at text only adventures, we wondered what you, the true adventurer, really think about graphics. Firstly we thought we'd take the opportunity to air own views.

Sandra - When I was a child I hated books without pictures, but as I grew older and my vocabulary improved, I developed a vivid imagination that transformed the written word into a series of pictures flashing through my mind.

When I read a book I live in it. When I attempt to solve an adventure, I am actually there combatting all the problems. If it says on screen that a giant crab is advancing towards me, my heart beats faster and my typing reaches incredible speeds in an effort to escape. If I then have to wait for a picture to finish before I know for sure that I've escaped, my bubble bursts and I'm back on my chair sitting at my desk, the atmosphere has completely gone! It's not that I don't appreciate art, I just prefer to let my imagination draw the pictures.

If graphics are used to give extra clues as in Valkyrie 17, then providing they draw quickly I'm all for them, otherwise I'd rather give them a miss.

Pat - Graphics are no substitute for imagination, and in my opinion are a positive hindrance. What could be more confusing than an illustration showing an opening in the floor with the parser refusing to recognise its existence. If we must have graphics, let them be accurate and USEFUL!

Shops won't stock text only games as they "don't sell". How can they sell if they are not stocked!? Lord of the Rings is a text/graphics adventure (so I'm told I've seen very little in the way of illustrations at all in the game), yet that game crowds the shelves of many software shops UNSOLD! Mordon's Quest has no pictures, yet it is very popular!

When writing games, available memory is limited. Hunchback consists of a pretty screen with very few puzzles. Colossal Adventure has no graphics and lots to do I know which I prefer!

Keith Milner of Mandarin kindly gave us permission to print an extract from his newsletter "Mandarin Muse" which gives his feelings on graphics in a slightly different way

THE ADVENTURE WARS

During excavations at a remote site, believed to hold the treasures of a lost city, an ancient scroll was discovered which recounts a history of long ago when adventures were more common than they are today. The scroll records the struggle for power between two ruling families of the Kingdom of Adventuria. One faction who called themselves the Grafix believed that adventures could be told in pictures, whereas the Textites maintained that only the written word could properly convey the atmosphere of a real adventure.

Translated scroll. The battle is relevant to arguments continuing today (for is it not said that history repeats itself?) and it has, therefore been translated and reproduced in full in this learned journal. The discerning reader may detect an element of bias in this ancient document, but as all historians will know, history is written by the victors, and in this case there is no doubt about who won!

The scroll starts with the champions having agreed to fight in the public arena, each using the armoury of his faction. Let the tale unfold

The Battle between Sir John Lively-Text and Baron Boring Boring-Grafix

"At the east end of the arena Sir John sat calmly on his powerful white stallion, his back to the rising sun, with the rays of light gleaming off his shining armour seeming to pour from his inner being rather than from some external source. Grafix version: To the west: Baron Boring: Also here: A horse.

Sir John drew forth the singing sword Theoril, and the watching crowd gasped with awe, knowing that once unsheathed it would not rest until boring adventures had been rid from the land forever. Grafix version: To the west: Baron Boring: Also here: A horse: A sword.

The white stallion pawed the ground restlessly, then reared high into the air as the battle cry of the Textites shook the arena, and Sir John began his fateful charge. Grafix version: To the west: Baron Boring sitting on a rectangular box with four legs has one of his matchstick arms longer than the other in supposed representation of his sword.

In a few seconds Sir John covered the 100 yards that separated him from his static opponent and with one mighty blow of Theoril struck the string of pixels from the boring grasp. So powerful was the force of the magic blade that the boring Baron tumbled from his gymnasium horse and lay semi-conscious in the dust. Sir John turned the majestic charger and thundered again towards the grovelling body of the wretched Baron, the golden hooves of the stallion crashing to a halt within inches of the boring cranium. (There was, in any event, nothing in the cranium which could have been damaged.) Grafix version: A white knight (mounted): A Baron (dismounted): Also here: A sword.

The crowd roared, hoping to see the Baron's box-like head struck from his box-like shoulders, but in the fervour of the moment they had forgotten the compassion and mercy for which the Textites were famed throughout all Adventuria. Placing his radiant sword on the unprotected throat of his adversary Sir John obtained the surrender of the Baron and a promise that the Grafix would no longer bore Adventurers with their feeble picture stories. The supremacy of text over grafix was proved conclusively.

Some said Sir John was foolish in his kindness, and that by not slaying the Baron Grafix he had left the kingdom open to a future invasion. But the kingdom lived in peace thereafter and many exciting tales were told of dragons and their treasure, of travel to unknown lands faraway, (even to the stars in silver ships), and of how brave adventurers saved the land from destruction."

Comment from Keith Milner.

Has the prophecy in the scroll remained true? With the advent of computers of 128k capacity and beyond have we now reached a time where text and graphics can live together in harmony? Of course, an

attractive picture on a loading screen can enhance a game, but looking at the field of written fiction generally, it seems unlikely that computer interactive fiction will develop in the longer term with many graphic screens. Put simply, adults do not buy picture books because they prefer to create better pictures in their own imagination. We shall see.

QUESTIONNAIRES

Most of you will have received a questionnaire by now, designed to help us keep track of who can do what with which machines and utilities.

If you haven't yet received one, please let us know and one will wing its way to you for completion.

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OBJECTS AND THEIR USES

DANGER MOUSE IN THE BLACK FOREST CHATEAU Part 1 - Graham Robson

Tree	-	Climb it and get key
Shovel	-	To clear the snow
Bottle	-	Fill with spa water
Axe	-	To chop logs in forest
Bucket	-	Fill with water from moat
Ale	-	Give to werewolf
Herring	-	Give to cat

SECRET OF ST. BRIDES

Mouse	-	Frightens the elephant
Trunk	-	Open it to find a basket
Academic Gown	-	A useful disguise - wear it

THE ZACARON MYSTERY

Talisman	-	Give to old man
Silver and black coin	-	Give to old man
Leather bucket	-	Fill it with water
Penknife	-	Cuts hole in tent

GROUND ZERO

Radio	-	Trade for loaf
Torch	-	To see in shelter
Axe	-	To cut conifers
Ladder	-	To get over garden wall

TIME MACHINE

Strange machine	-	For time travel
2 Buttons	-	"Press FOR" or "Press REV"
Bush	-	Grab it to survive in swamp
Needle, thread and torn sail	-	To fix boat

ARROW OF DEATH Pt 2

Shrubbery	-	Needed on the bridge
Warrior's uniform	-	Wear it
Mud	-	There's a lever hidden in it
Bread	-	To feed the mule
Cheese	-	Eat it

PRECISION CORNER

EUREKA - Prehistoric Times- Graham Robson

To cross desert, get sulphur, coal, saltpetre, crystals and then type "Make gunpowder", with log, powder and round stone (found in the village) you must make a gun. Get pot and ladder off the cavemen by giving them the necklace and ruby, take the pot to the watering hole and fill it. From the edge of the desert go S, S, E, S, shoot dinosaur, drink water, S, S, throw stick. Jumping over holes is essential. In cave with writing go E, and keep going S, for gems, S, S, W, N, W, S, use ladder to get up.

SHERLOCK - Graham Robson

Get Chinaman's disguise, wear it, take lamp, take off disguise, leave the house, hail cab, say to cabbie "Go to Kings Cross Rd", visit platform, follow Inspector round for a while, try asking people's addresses by saying to "Tell me your address". When time reaches around 10.50p.m. go back to Leatherhead Station and catch a train back to Kings Cross Station, walk to Kings cross Rd, hail cab, say to cabbie "Go to Slater St".

TIME OF THE END

When stuck in the birdcage, "Lift sandsheet, Down".

SECRET OF ST. BRIDES

To open forbidden door, "Use newspaper, under door, use pencil, push key, unlock door, open door". To get key in tall chamber, "Eat mushroom, get key, unlock door", then eat the other side of the mushroom. Magic trick to impress Fir Bolg, "Write paper, rub paper".

ZACARON MYSTERY

Cut tent. Knock thrice.

GRAND LARCENY - Graham Robson

If you examine the rubbish by the hotel entrance to the right, the tie lets you in. When by the lift type "Go up". Give the flowers to the secretary at ther desk. Crack the safe, open it and examine it.

GOLDEN BATON - Graham Robson

Wave quartz to defeat lizard man, hold mirror to defeat gorgon, feed the crabs with the slugs.

MURAL

Coupon out. In bucket.

ISLAND OF RIDDLES

Hit stone.

BUGS AND AMUSING RESPONSES

MORDONS QUEST

When Mordon makes his request - say NO!

ADVENTURE EXCHANGE SERVICE

Don't let your completed (or 'given up on') adventures gather dust in a drawer or cupboard. Exchange them for fresh challenges with A.E.S.!

For a nominal handling charge of £1.50 per exchange, you can have new games to attack every month. Free membership. Full details from Adventure Probe.

ADVENTURE GAME CONVERT

..... has around 20 items of Amstrad software for sale at reasonable prices, or possibly swap for other software. Details from; Bob Lamb, 82 Finkle St, Cottingham, E Yorks.

CRYPTIC HINTS

GROUND ZERO

The bicycle needs a careful examination. The shopkeeper will make a musical exchange. Don't cross on red. Wire fences are easy to mend - don't forget your cutters. Only VIP's get into the shelter - try a nom de plume. The metal box is freshening when used properly.

TIME MACHINE

Shoot mad dogs. The rock makes a good wedge. Prise metal with metal. Climb when on board ship. Dig being surrounded by water.

CHAOS FACTOR

The petrified forest is frightened of the acid cloud. You won't get arrested for eating chips - or prunes!

MURAL

The penguin is late - but doesn't realise it. Mothballs are hydrophobic. A friend by your side is needed to enter the postbox, patch the bucket to find him. Don't go to sea in a sieve.

WORM IN PARADISE

Empty the dagget for a useful hiding place. Robots follow directions, don't move the junk, get them to do it for you.

SNOWBALL

Cats eat anything and everything. Waldroids need vandalising. Don't dig too deeply.

RED MOON

You need something different to cheese at the acid pool. You can't cross the thin red line if it doesn't exist!

HUNCHBACK

The Bishop is a literary chap, and also very tidy. Two halves of a spook make a whole.

ISLAND OF RIDDLES

Do a Daley at the river.

KINGS/QUEENS OF THE CASTLE

JOHN BARNSLEY, 32 Merrivale Road, Rising Brook, Stafford, Staffs. ST17 9EB, has full solutions and complete maps to the following:-

Heroes of Karn, Empire of Karn, Crystals of Carus, Jewels of Babylon, Subsunk, Seabase Delta, Worm in Paradise, Voodoo Castle, Terrormolinos, Mordon's Quest, Neverending Story, Mindshadow, Urban Upstart, Robin of Sherwood, Hampstead, Wizard of Akyrz, Hobbit, Time Machine, Circus, Arrow of Death Pt 1, Emerald Isle, Lords of Time, Gremlins, Sorcerer of Claymorgue Castle, Red Moon, Ten Little Indians, Perseus and Andromeda, ZZZZ, Feasibility Experiment, Valkyrie 17, Bored of the Rings, Pirate Adventure, Very Big Cave Adventure, Valhalla, Golden Baton, Ring of Power, Adventureland, Quest for the Holy Grail, Hulk, Price of Magik, Return to Eden, Pilgrim, Snowqueen, Espionage Island, Inca Curse, Kentilla, The Helm, Ship of Doom, Spiderman, Planet of Death, Arrow of Death Pt 2, Escape from Pulsar 7, Project X/Microman, Zim Sala Bim, Castle of Terror, The Boggit, The Curse, The Golden Apple - plus hint sheets and unchecked solutions to many more.

TOM FROST, 61 Bailie Norrie Cres., Montrose, DD10 9DT, has completed the following:-

Crystal Quest, Golden Apple, Crystal Frog, Knight's Quest, Hexagonal Museum, Se Kaa of Assiah, Castle Adventure, Mansion Quest, Time Quest, Zacaron Mystery Pt 1, The Traveller, Rifts of Time, El Dorado, Alter Earth, Ship of Doom, Eye of Bain, Mountains of Ket, Temple of Vran, Final Mission, Eureka, Pharoah's Tomb, Magic Mountain, Greedy Gulch, Espionage Island, Inca Curse, Subsunk, Jewels of Babylon, Holy Grail, Mafia Contract, Sea of Ziron, Legacy, Marie Celeste, Urquahart Castle, Prospector, 1942 Mission, Earthbound, The Helm, Island Adventure, Mission X, Warlord, Operation Nightingale, Spy Trilogy.

MICHAEL JENNINGS, 19 Church Hill, Dodworth, Nr. Barnsley, S. Yorks, S75 3RX offers help in the following:-

Neverending Story, Warlord, Forest at Worlds End, Heroes of Karn, Robin of Sherwood, Subsunk, Fantasia Diamond and Lord of the Rings Pt 1.

SUE BURKE, 122 Glenwood Drive, Middleton, Manchester. M24 2TW. Tel 061 653 0005 offers help in the following:- Al-Strad, Bored of the Rings, Brawn Free, Forest at Worlds End, Heroes of Karn, The Hollow (Text), The Hollow (Text/Graphics), Inca Curse, Jewels of Babylon, Klondike Gold, Message from Andromeda, Microman/Project X, Mindshadow, Mordon's Quest, Mystery Mansion, Planet of Death, Espionage Island, Seabase Delta, Souls of Darkon, Spytrek, Subsunk, Terrormolinos, Warlord, Smuggler's Cove. Partial help on Beerhunter, Faerie, Quan Tulla.

LINDA FRIEND, Westland House, Front Street, Chedzoy, Bridgwater, Somerset. offers help in the following:-

Classic Adventure, Snowball, Erik the Viking, Forest at Worlds End, Hacker, Terrormolinos, Heroes of Karn, Emerald Isle, Mindshadow, Jewels of Babylon, Lords of Time.

MALCOLM AND PAUL SERBERT, 119 Skipton Rd, Harrogate, HG1 5LJ offer help on the following adventures:-

Fools Gold, Moriana Quest, Quest, Crowley Manor, Snowball, Heroes of Karn, Valley, The Pen and the Dark, Subsunk, Hobbit, Urban Upstart, Invincible Island, Ship of Death, Colditz, Spiderman, Inferno, Bored of the Rings, Mindshadow, Arrow of Death (Pt. 1), Lords of Time, Hulk, Return to Eden, Circus, Waxworks, Ten Little Indians, Time Machine, Feasibility Experiment, Golden Baton, Hampstead and Perseus and Andromeda.

MICHAEL RICHARDS, 8 Victoria Road, Roche, Cornwall, PL26 8JF offers help on:-

Bored of the Rings, Hampstead, Ten Little Indians, Valkyrie 17, Mindshadow, Mordon's Quest, Robin of Sherwood, Robin of Sherlock, Subsunk and Terrormolinos.

GANG OF THREE, 17 Larch House, 37 Shawsdale Road, Bromford, Birmingham, B36 8DG, offer help on the following:-

Hobbit, Bored of the Rings, Message from Andromeda, Forest at Worlds End, Lords of Midnight, Red Moon, Marie Celeste, Ship of Doom, Inca Curse, Espionage Island, Pharoah's Tomb, Magic Mountain, Colditz, Valkyrie 17, Eye of Bain, Subsunk, The Helm, Planet of Death, Quest for the Holy Grail, Golden Apple, Ground Zero, Fourth Protocol (Pt 1), Mafia Contract 1, Microman/Project X, Commando, Golden Baton.

KINGS/QUEENS (CONTINUED)

See Issue 3 for full lists and Issue 5 for updates for the following Kings of the Castle.

JON FRAISE, 79 Clapgate Lane, Wigan, Lancs

MARK GREAVES, 16 Buckler's Court, Northend, Portsmouth, Hants.

LEN JAMES, 37 Northway, Lymm, Cheshire.

SIMON LILLEY, 21 Roberts St, Rushden, Northants.

GRAHAM ROBSON, 169, Buddle Rd, Benwell, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 8JW

ALAN STEWART, 11g, Craigpark St, Faifley, Clydebank. G81 5BS

PERRY WILLIAMS, 12 Godestone Rd, Cambridge, CB5 8HR

GEOFF WING, 171, Beadlemead, Netherfield, Milton Keynes.

GORDON YACOMINE, 30 Finavon St, Dundee, Scotland.

JOHN SADLER, 12 Wheatsheaf Close, Wheatsheaf Lane, Wrabness, Manningtree, Essex,

ASKING FOR HELP

When writing for help from either ourselves or the Kings and Queens, please give as much detail as possible as to the nature of your problem, where you have reached (include a rough map if possible), objects found and any use made of them.

Also, please give some indication as to whether you want a cryptic hint, an explanation of what to do next, the exact words for a problem, partial solution, full solution or map.

Please don't forget to enclose an SAE when requesting help.

READERS LETTERS

Dear Pat,

Many thanks for the issues of Probe and Contact, please find enclosed cheque for 12 issues of each.

I liked your mag, also what you're doing and I sincerely wish you all the best. You have got my backing as far as promoting unknown writers. I have bought lots of adventures both mail order one man have a go and the big it has to have a £10 ticket slapped on it because it's a big software house name, and to be quite honest I would sooner buy the unknown writers' games, they seem to put a lot more time and effort into it.

Martin O'Connor, 56 Whittington Hill, Old Whittington, Chesterfield, Derbyshire.

Dear Pat and Sandra,

I received my three issues of Probe this morning and I'm very impressed, it seems to cover nearly every aspect possible. I'm still stuck on Faerie and Beerhunter. Talking of Beerhunter I'm disappointed with Global Software who I phoned up for help. The man who answered said that the person who dealt with help was on holiday but he would try to help. He couldn't remember what to do at the point where I was stuck so he took my name and address and said he'd send me a clue sheet. I waited a week and got nothing so I wrote explaining about the phone call and where I was stuck and again I have heard nothing. Mind you maybe it's my own fault because ages ago I bought The Hollow and when I phoned another club I'm in for help, he asked who it was by, I told him and he said it was no wonder he hadn't heard of it if it was from Global.

At the moment I'm playing Lords of Time, or I will be when I've finished this letter, the ironing, the tea, get the kids to bed etc, the boring stuff that always interrupts the aggravation of playing adventures. I was up till 4 o'clock this morning playing it. I'd just got to level 5 and I was having trouble with the map so I went to bed, then I was up again at 9 with the kids. By the way Sandra you're not alone with five kids I have 3 boys and 2 girls. I started young because I hadn't heard of adventure games then.

I too bought the computer for the kids to help with their education etc, they're lucky if they get near it. But I'm not doing too bad I suppose, because I have almost converted the eldest to adventures, telling him they're better for his health etc. So I'm getting a bit of help, when I've been stuck he's sometimes come up with something I hadn't tried and got me a bit further on.

Right I'd better go now and get this lot in an envelope. I've enjoyed writing this letter to you both because it's like writing to friends and not just a helpline type thing. I actually feel as if I've known you for ages. Keep up the good work, look forward to hearing from you soon. I've decided after this I'll do my ironing and go to the chippy for tea so I can get on the computer quicker. See you soon.

Sue Burke, 122 Glenwood Drive, Middleton, Manchester. M24 2TW

IN - TOUCH

Adventure Probe is read by adventurers..... so if you want to get in touch with other adventurers, use these pages to let others know what you want.

Send us details (up to about 50 words) of your requirements eg Pen-pals, items wanted or offered for sale or exchange.

This is a FREE service to readers of Probe.... please use it!

Dear Sandra and Pat,

My name is Braham Robson, I am 14 years old. I own a Commodore 64, luckily I'm the only one in the house who is clever enough to use it. I started to get hooked on Adventures after playing 'Terrorbolinos'.

Currently my computer is getting fixed, the games I was working on were 'Causes of Chaos' (very hardly), 'Sherlock', 'Seas of Blood', 'Eureka' (Caribbean), 'Snowball', 'Erik the Viking', 'Maxworks' and 'Ship of Doom'.

I would like to see some maps in your magazine. If I can help you in any way please let me know. I enclose some help for the magazine.

B. Robson, 169 Buddle Road, Benwell, Newcastle upon Tyne. NE4 8JW

Dear Pat and Sandra,

I have just received my first copy of your excellent publication. I am one of the older generation of computer freaks but I am avidly interested in Adventuring, though I have only been at it a short while but have completed 'Neverending Story' by Ocean and 'Planet of Death'.

I also saw at the bottom of one of the pages that Sandra is after a copy of the 'Quill' and seeing that I have got 'BAC' and 'Quill', I am willing to let you have it for the nominal sum of a years subs to your mag!

George O'Donnell, 11 Earl's Ave, Bamber Bridge, Preston, Lancs.

(It's a deal! Thank you. Just goes to show how it pays to advertise in Probe.....EDITOR)

Dear Sandra,

Thanks for your letter and for your kind gesture in giving me a month's free subscription, which I am going to regard as a "token of appreciation"; I feel sure that an Enchantress of your rank would not stoop to giving a bribe.

I have owned an Atari 800XL (with disk drive and cassette recorder) for less than a year, this being my first computer proper - (I previously confined gaming to an Atari VCS 2600 which was as much for family use than personal). I bought the aforementioned computer because Currys/Dixons were selling them at a ridiculously low price and having seen a Scott Adams played elsewhere and liking what I saw - just the sort of frustrating relaxation (there's a contradictory combination) that I enjoy - it enabled me to really get into adventures, especially as I was able to buy some Scott Adams and Mysterious Adventures cheaply on cassette. However, as much as I enjoy them and subsequent adventures that I've either purchased or received conveniently as birthday presents, I have only been able to complete a few without outside help. My complete successes, so far, have been 'Wishbringer' (what a great Infocon for beginners), 'Voodoo Castle', 'Golden Baton', 'Ten Little Indians' of the well-known titles. 'Enchanter' was approximately 98% of my own efforts, the remaining 2% being a matter of knowing what to do but not being able to compose the correct instructions. The other titles which I have completed have been with the help of various 'helpline' sources, so I feel a bit of a cheat when I write "Completed" against an adventure such as those.

As an example of my low grading, I have been working on the second of the 'Enchanter' trilogy, namely 'Sorcerer'. I was doing fine until about halfway through the game I came upon the Glass Maze. It could not be mapped in the usual way because the only way to negotiate the maze was by turning into a Bat and using a Bat's Sonar senses. After wrestling with this problem for a couple of weeks I got thoroughly bored so I touted around and finally found a source of wisdom which enabled me to complete the maze and get out to where a certain spell was located. I then found that I was in a dead end and would have to travel back through the maze: unfortunately, my enemy had cast a spell completely altering the maze.

Coupled with this, a Dorn beast (no, don't ask me) was on my heels. This completely flattened me and I had to resort once more to powerful oracles and this time I finished up with the official Infocom map of the Glass Maze. Even then certain possibilities were not mentioned and it was quite a while before I finished travelling the maze. Later in the game I became involved in temporal travel in which I actually met myself coming back. This led to such complications that I was again forced to seek advice from the Gods; that was a quest in itself. After that, things could only get better relying more on logic than guesswork and I eventually completed the game.

I enclose a copy of the solution to 'Sorcerer' to use as you will in rescuing hapless (what is hap and how can it get less?) adventurers such as myself.

Although I didn't enjoy 'Sorcerer' anywhere as much as 'Enchanter', which contained an eldritch atmosphere completely missing from the former title, nevertheless 'Sorcerer' had some good moments and some marvellous red herrings, especially the fairground with its weird sideshows and rides, but I did feel that the scenario was too sprawling, whereas 'Enchanter' was mainly confined to a ruined/haunted castle, the atmosphere of which was brilliantly described (at least, to me) and succeeded in creating a feeling almost amounting to apprehension as to what vague horror was next to be implied. On reflection, I think that 'Sorcerer' went down in my opinion when I reached the Glass Maze, probably because most, if not all, mazes soon bore me. Why, oh why, do the creators of adventures think it incumbent upon them to include one or more mazes in often otherwise first class stories. As a guide, in all the Fantasy books I have read - and there have been many from E. R. Burroughs through Michael Moorcock to Piers Anthony - I cannot recall their deathless heroes getting stuck in a tortuous and often illogical maze, though many puzzles with a solution that is logical within the author's frame of reference form the basis of their many quests, e.g. the wonderful Xanth books of Piers Anthony. Sorry to sound off like this but mazes really do spoil games for me and I often wonder if the author of the game puts an unnecessary maze into his plot to make it seem longer and more difficult, which it certainly does for me without being entertaining.

I am holding the final part of the trilogy, 'Spellbreaker', in abeyance until such time as I may feel more qualified to tackle it, as the official Infocom rating for this game is 'EXPERT'!

An Infocom game I would like to recommend is 'Planetfall'. I'm only a short way into it but the humour is of a high standard.

A comment on your excellent editorial in Probe 3, I would say how much I agree with your observation on the absence of an Adventure magazine in the bookshops. I have thought for some time that if someone could produce a D&D style publication for computer adventurers, available at John Menzies and W.H.Smith, the publishers would have few spare copies on their hands. Who knows, in time maybe "Adventure Probe" will lead the way in this direction.

One last thing, after several months (about 3 I think) and some help from various Scroll Bearers, I have just completed 'Zork 1' only to finish the game at the beginning of 'Zork 2' (there's crafty!). Again terrific atmosphere so I'm enclosing a copy of my solution, although I understand it varies slightly in one part from some versions, but not enough to crash the game. Sorry I haven't supplied maps but although I understand them, I very much doubt that other people would follow their weird wanderings.

Hoping you keep up the good work with your first class publication.

R. H. Rainbird, 62 Coniston Drive, Holmes Chapel.7, Nr. Crewe.

ADVENTURE PROBE. 78 MERTON RD, WIGAN. WN3 6AT.

DON'T FORGET TO WRITE TO US!!!

HELPLINE

JOHN BARNSLEY, 32 Merrivale Rd, Rising Brook, Stafford, Staffs. ST17 9EB, would like the solution to 'Dungeon Adventure' if anybody has one. He is also willing to swap maps and solutions.

SUE BURKE, 122 Glenwood Drive, Middleton, Manchester. M24 2TW. I am stuck in Quan Tulla, I have with me Shockcape (worn), Air Mask (worn), Docking Badge (worn), Neon Light Stick, Sulphur Tab, Data Card and One Cred Note. I've found a use for the card and cred, but not for the light stick and sulphur tab. There is a ruptured door that I can't get through, if I go through the jammed securi-door and Interlock 1, after a few moves I freeze to death. I've also found ladders, gaslyter, lead ball, cigar, glue and a key - all of which I've used. I'm also wearing a booster pack which I haven't found a use for. Please help - it's driving me mad!!

A. COPEMAN, 23A Dorking Crescent, Clacton on Sea, Essex. CO16 8FQ is stuck in Castle of Terror. I am unable to escape with the treasure. When I replace the book into the bookcase, the game crashes. (Is this a bug?)

ROSEMARY MOSS, 73 Victoria Road, Blandford, Dorset. DT11 7JR wants help on Cosmic Capers and Streets of London by Supersoft on Commodore plus 4. (Originally Commodore 64 adventures.)

GEORGE O'DONNELL, 11 Earls Ave, Bamber Bridge, Preston, Lancs. In Kentilla, where do I find the cage? Bored of the Rings, how do I get to the sunglasses?

TERRY GRAY, 27 Maple Ave, Yiewsley, Middx. UB7 8LS. Avior (from the 16/48 tape mag.), where's the refuelling plant? Jason and the Fleece, How do I get the fleece from the tree without being gassed? Eureka (Prehistoric), how do I cross the desert? I've got water and the canon but I keep snuffing it?

EDWARD YOONG, 31 Burnside Avenue, Belfast, BT8 4HW, wants solutions to Twin Kingdom Valley and Return to Eden. (So does Probe. If anyone has them please send them in to us and we'll forward copies to Edward.)

T. Frost.

